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SF PERUSALS

A 1940s Radio Christmas Carol

Book by
Walton Jones

Music composed and
arranged by
David Wohl

Lyrics by
Faye Greenberg

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830
NEW YORK HOLLYWOOD LONDON TORONTO
SAMUELFRENCH.COM

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ISBN 978-0-573-69893-4 Printed in U.S.A. #29696

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An orchestration consisting of **Piano/Vocal Score (with optional organ)** will be loaned two months prior to the production ONLY on the receipt of the Licensing Fee quoted for all performances, the rental fee and a refundable deposit. Please note that **bass** and **"sound effect prop" percussion** can be added as desired by the producing group, however no individual scores are available for these parts.

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A non-musical early draft of ***A 1940s RADIO CHRISTMAS CAROL*** was first produced at Bas Bleu Theatre in Fort Collins, Colorado on November 20, 2007. The performance was directed by Terry Dodd and Wendy Ishii, with sets by Dennis Madigan, costumes by Sandra J. Frye, property design by Michael Gorgan, and lighting by Jimmie Robinson. The production stage manager was Lisa Mason. The cast was as follows:

CLIFTON FEDDINGTON . . . . . Bruce Bergquist
DON STERLING . . . . . Don Kraus
BARRY MOORE. . . . . Rich Hicks
MOE AMBROSE-COHEN. . . . . Scott Rathbun
FRITZ CANIGLIARO . . . . . Rob Seligmann
JUDY DAVENPORT . . . . . Niccole Carner
BUZZ CRENSHAW. . . . . Dan Tschirhart
ESTHER LEWIS PIRNIE . . . . . Wendy Ishii
FLAPS BENNIGAN . . . . . Dick MacDonald

A 1940s RADIO CHRISTMAS CAROL was first produced at Bas Bleu Theatre in Fort Collins, Colorado on November 15, 2008. The performance was directed by Walton Jones and assistant directed by Jessica Lee Rogers, with sets by Dennis Madigan, costumes by Sandra J. Frye, property design by Michael Gorgan, Hair Design by Kirsten Hovorka, and lighting by Dennis Madigan. The production stage manager was Faith Harbert. The cast was as follows:

CLIFTON FEDDINGTON . . . . . Michael Stone
WILLIAM ST. CLAIRE . . . . . Jonathan Farwell
FRITZ CANIGLIARO . . . . . Chris Valcho
CHARLES "CHOLLY" BUTTS. . . . . Scott Rathbun
ISADORE "BUZZ" CRENSHAW. . . . . Dan Tschirhart
"LITTLE" JACKIE SPARKS . . . . . Joshua Savage
MARGIE O'BRIEN. . . . . Maggie Tisdale
JUDITH DAVENPORT. . . . . Julia Uthe
SALLY SIMPSON . . . . . Elizabeth Nodich
ESTHER LEWIS PIRNIE . . . . . Wendy Ishii
TOOTS NAVARRE. . . . . David Wohl
HAROLD MULLINS . . . . . Matt Strauch

CHARACTERS

CLIFTON FEDDINGTON – 55 year-old Mutual Announcer, front man for WOV's Nash-Kelvinator Mystery Theatre. Formerly producer of the "Mutual Manhattan Variety Cavalcade," which Mutual removed from its lineup just after Christmas, 1942. Now broadcasts his Friday night "Man with No Tomorrow" private eye radio drama which originates from a studio near the transmitter in Newark, NJ. A pioneer in "spot advertising." Wears wire-frame glasses like Glenn Miller. Known for being cheap. Has a crush on Judith.

WILLIAM ST. CLAIRE – 70 year-old, retired star of stage and screen with a long list of Broadway credits, 46 films, including the 1916 British film, "The Right to be Happy," aka "Scrooge the Skinflint." With a great mane of dramatic white hair, William is a bit of a curmudgeon and looks down on radio as one of the bastard children of the stage. William's 31 year-old son David served as a pilot in the US Ninth Air Force. His son was killed when his P-47 was shot down over the French city of Toulon in June 1943. Mr. St. Claire, a widower, lives alone on the Upper East Side in Manhattan. He keeps with him a photograph of his son and the telegram that notified him of his son's death. A guest performer in tonight's show, Mr. St. Claire plays Scrooge.

CHARLES "CHOLLY" BUTTS – 35 year-old funny man. Has a day job as a baker at Weequahic Diner (where his specialty is the nesselrode pie). A little stout. Lives in Jersey City, with his wife, Midge, has no kids, and has a hopeless and unrequited crush on Margie. As a regular, plays Mishke Bibble among other cameos.

FRITZ CANIGLIARO – Once an east-coast Florsheim Shoe salesman (and still plugs them whenever he gets an opportunity for a little commission), now a WOV regular, Fritz plays private eye Rick Roscoe, star of Clifton's usual (and very popular) Friday night offering, "The Man with No Tomorrow." Last year, Rick Roscoe had a Christmas show on Christmas Eve (called "Silent Knife, Holy Knife"). Fritz is a little disappointed that the tradition didn't continue. The resident masher, cynic and wise-guy, Fritz plays Frank Nelson cameos in comedy sketches. Always nattily dressed and well-groomed. Wears an Adolph Menjou moustache. In his early 40s.

"LITTLE" JACKIE SPARKS – Not actually "little," but young. A tenor with a high speaking voice. Having just graduated from high school, Jackie, only 17, lives with his mom in suburban Newark. Calls home probably a dozen times a day. Teased a lot. Still has a Sunday paper route. In the winter, wears ear muffs and galoshes. (Think Dennis Day.)

JUDITH DAVENPORT – Although quite the cutup herself, Judith is the resident "leading lady" playing all such roles as a regular. Has two kids and two ex's and wants no more of either. Determined and stubborn. Lives in a brownstone on West 75th Street at Broadway in Manhattan. Considers herself a "legit" actress, Judith has appeared in two New York City stage productions including a role in the chorus of the Mercury Theatre production of "The Cradle Will Rock" four years ago. Day job working as a switchboard operator at Stickel Advertising Agency in Manhattan. Has Clifton's eye. In her 30s.

MARGIE O'BRIEN – Brassy, flippant, with a voice to match (think Ginger Rogers in "Stage Door"). As a show regular, plays the comic roles. This 30 year-old Irish-American comedienne lives with her two sisters, Zazu and Vi, in a two-room apartment in Queens. She works days as a bookkeeper/typist/stenographer/receptionist for William Dougherty, MD, an oculist in Queens. Margie has appeared on countless radio programs, including frequent appearances on the Allen's Alley segment of the Fred Allen Show and is a favorite on The Horn & Hardart Kiddie Hour. Like Cholly, a ham.

SALLY SIMPSON – 20 year-old Sally seems sweet and gentle, but is a tough lady. Lives on the lower east side of Manhattan. As a show regular, plays all animals, babies, insects, little kids. In addition to being a radio personality at WOV, Sally makes the long train ride to Babylon, Long Island, three days a week, to contribute to the war effort by working for Republic Aviation operating drill presses and riveting guns. Sally (whose personal best is 2,155 rivets in one shift) was dubbed "The Home Front Girl" in the company newspaper. Always trying to recruit the other WOV women to join "the cause."

ISADORE "BUZZ" CRENSHAW – His life is his work. The 24 year-old "sound effectician" at WOV. Has a sharp wit and is always agreeable, whistling, and in a good mood. Born and raised in Bayonne where he was valedictorian at Bayonne High, Class of '37. Raised by his Aunts Lulu and Gilly. Moved back to Bayonne when the Cavalcade became Nash Mystery Theater and began broadcasting from Newark. Although he does sound effects for several other shows broadcast by WOV, some in Manhattan, it is clearly Clifton's weekly broadcast that is the biggest challenge and most fun. Wears an FDR button. Spends a lot of time with Sally Simpson. Buzz lives alone.

TOOTS NAVARRE – Musical director, composer and pianist/organist for the Mystery Theatre. (Could be a man or woman.) Besides his/her usual musical chores for WOV, he/she and his/her wife/husband Faith/Frank provide both underscoring to the radio drama as well as their new and old holiday songs for the broadcast. [Underscoring is left to the discretion of the musical director. The piano and organ are used as contrasting colors, as desired.]

ESTHER LEWIS PIRNIE – backstage audio engineer and transmitter supervisor for WOV Radio. [Optional character. BUZZ can take ESTHER's business and lines, lines in post-show can simply be cut.]

HAROLD J. MULLINS – Concierge of the Hotel Aberdeen in Newark. [Optional character. CLIFTON can take his announcements and business or cut them.]

Note: the characters of **MARGIE** and **JUDITH** could be collapsed into **JUDITH**, as could **FRITZ** be absorbed by the character of **CLIFTON**. As noted above, **ESTHER** and **HAROLD** are optional.

SETTING

WOV-Radio Satellite Studio in the lobby level of the Hotel Aberdeen at 10-12 Washington Place at the foot of Elizabeth Avenue, between Frelinghuysen Avenue and East Peddie Street in Newark, NJ., Bigelow 5-7979.

TIME

Friday, December 24, 1943, 7:30 PM

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Although *A 1940s RADIO CHRISTMAS CAROL* is scored only for keyboards, producers could cast actors who also play instruments to supplement and fill in the orchestrations.

It's worth noting that radio actors frequently used under-the breath ad libs to help coordinate their lines with the sfx. Also, during live radio dramas performers would often drop loose sheets of script onto the floor to avoid the sound of turning pages. Although impractical for the stage, it could be something a few others do which might puzzle St. Claire.

Except where specifically noted, the entire cast is onstage all the time. During the broadcast, their lives, as revealed in the pre- and post-shows (silent behavior or dialogue), continue to be played out for the live audience, things that the radio audience would not see.

A NOTE ON THE MUSIC

Whoever is cast as Toots is encouraged to improvise underscoring, although an indication of underscoring motifs will be provided to those licensing the musical play for performance.

The author will provide free-of-charge the recorded sound effects, pre- and post-show music, reference photos of the period microphones, and a reference DVD video of a 1939 radio drama being performed with actors, microphones, and sound effects men. For these materials, please contact the author at: jones.walton@gmail.com.

A digital mock-up of St. Claire's telegram and the photo of his son, David, the calendar page of December 1943, and the St. Claire poster from a fictitious production of "Macbeth," can also be provided, as well as an example of the "fake" program.

The author wishes to thank Amy Scholl and Steven Adler for their wisdom and advice responding to countless drafts of this script.

(1940s décor randomly tags the studio. Some Christmas decorations, especially around Toots' area, brighten up the institutional green drabness. There is a call board with a few telegrams, phone messages, a pay phone on the wall, sign-in sheets, etc. Magazines and newspapers rest on most surfaces. "On Air," "Applause" and "Laughter" signs hang or are mounted near the ceiling. There is a cathedral radio sitting next to a tall Bunn coffee maker. At present, lights are the unflattering light of work lights. There is a prominent "Currier & Ives" 1943 calendar on the upstage wall, showing the month of December. Days 1-23 are x'ed out. Besides the pay phone, there is a "studio" phone, always answered by Esther Pirnie and off-limits to the cast for placing personal calls.)

(The Feddington players have taken it on the chin over the last year. They are no longer a variety show, as mutual has dumped most of its variety offerings. The studios are a little more crowded, rustic, almost improvised. And they now broadcast from Newark, New Jersey.)

(Over the house speakers, plays the end of FDR's December 24, 1943 fireside chat. About twenty minutes til curtain, **BUZZ** *enters to prepare for the broadcast. He stops to listen occassionally, shakes his head empathically.)*

*(***BUZZ** *makes his SFX props ready, makes coffee, sweeps the stage, takes the sacks off of the period mics, and checks all of the cables. The mics have chrome "flags" fixed on the tops and sides that say "WOV" which* **BUZZ** *polishes carefully. He hauls out the clock, facing it upstage for Clifton to see, after setting the time from his wristwatch. He retrieves a small step ladder from a corner in the studio to open the transome above the door then waving a little air into the studio.)*

*(***TOOTS** *is also already there, coming in and out, reading a* Life *magazine, and talking sotto voce with* **BUZZ**.*)*

(Once they have entered, actors are free to wander around, on and offstage, they enter from the upstage door to the hall or from the "hotel lobby," occasionally shaking styrofoam snow off his or her overcoat, etc. [The stage left or stage right entrance from the theatre lobby should have a door for slamming when characters enter or exit.] Some coats and hats are hung on the coat rack onstage, some are taken offstage. There is a prominent poster of **WILLIAM ST. CLAIRE** *in a Shakespearean production hanging in sight.)*

(The "pre-broadcast" is to be played very quickly, not everything needs to be heard by the audience. And it needs to be played at a pretty fast overlapping clip like the opening scene of "The Front Page")

(Note: "SFX" indicates an effect or anything done by Buzz, the sound effects man. "REC'G" indicates Buzz has "thrown" the needle on a 78-rpm recording on a turntable mounted beside the foley table; "music" refers to a musical bridge or theme provided by **TOOTS** *on the organ and/or piano.)*

FDR VOICE. *(V.O.)* "…We are united in seeking the kind of victory that will guarantee that our grandchildren can grow and, under God, may live their lives, free from the constant threat of invasion, destruction, slavery and violent death."

*(***BUZZ** *is putting up a William St. Claire poster.)*

FRITZ. *(entering)* Where's the boss?

*(***BUZZ** *"thumbs" offstage.)*

FDR VOICE. *(V.O.)* "Some of our men overseas are now spending their third Christmas far from home. To them and to all others overseas or soon to go overseas, I can give assurance that it is the purpose of their Government to win this war and to bring them home at the earliest possible date."

FRITZ. Coffee ready?

BUZZ. Yep.

FDR VOICE. *(V.O.)* "Tonight, on Christmas Eve, all men and women everywhere who love Christmas are thinking of that ancient town and of the star of faith that shone there more than nineteen centuries ago."

*(***CLIFTON** *crosses from the actual lobby door through the door upstage studio.)*

FRITZ. Hey, Clifton.

CLIFTON. *(looking at the poster of St. Claire)* Nice touch, Buzz.

BUZZ. I thought it might make him feel more welcome.

CLIFTON. Buzz, run some audio through that cable by the turntable. I think it's fried.

BUZZ. Right, Mr. Feddington.

*(***CLIFTON***, without stopping, exits through downstage Exit.* **BUZZ** *works on the cable, eventually replacing it.)*

FRITZ. I'm surprised he'd be willing to do this show.

BUZZ. Looking to keep his hand in, I guess.

FRITZ. What's up with the "Mr. Feddington," brownie?

BUZZ. Respect. Something you'd know nothing about.

FRITZ. Hey, be nice. It's Christmas. *(beat)* St. Claire has a son who's over there, yes?

*(***FDR VOICE** *continues.)*

BUZZ. *(nodding)* Mm mm.

FRITZ. You know where?

BUZZ. Loose lips…

FRITZ. The best kind.

BUZZ. Loose lips sink ships. *(confidentially)* I think he's a pilot in France somewhere.

FRITZ. *(making coffee)* Mmm, France. Wine. Baguettes. Camembert. And women.

BUZZ. And machine guns, and mortars, and tanks…

(They listen to **FDR VOICE***.)*

FRITZ. Lighten up, Buzz.

FDR VOICE. *(V.O.)* "American boys are fighting today in snow-covered mountains, in malarial jungles, (and) on blazing deserts, they are fighting on the far stretches of the sea and above the clouds, and fighting for the thing for which they struggle. I think it is best symbolized by the message that came out of Bethlehem."

(After the unintelligible sign-off from an anonymous announcer, the network hosts a generic dance band from some distant city.)

MARGIE. *(entering from upstage door, stomping her feet on the floor mat)* Jeez. What a mess.

BUZZ. *(stops what he's doing, leans on the broom, wistfully)* It's so pretty at first, isn't it? Like when I was a kid, all Currier & Ives. Then the cars turn it into –

CHOLLY. *(entering from theatre lobby, about the snow)* Dreck.

BUZZ. *(not looking up from setting up, sweeping, working)* Cholly Butts.

CHOLLY. *(opening his arms to* **MARGIE***)* Ah, Margie, what a beauty!

FRITZ. Hey, Cholly.

CHOLLY. *(signing in)* Nice drapes, Fritz.

FRITZ. Thanks. *(referring to his shoes)* Check out the kicks.

CHOLLY. Righteous.

MARGIE. Hey, Cholly, How's tricks?

CHOLLY. *(disappointed in her)* Margie, Margie, Margie…it's "nu?"

BUZZ. *(sweeping)* Move, Fritz.

MARGIE. Oh. "Hey Cholly, s'nu?"

CHOLLY. No, no, no. "S'nu"? Just "nu?" And you don't have to say the "Hey Cholly" part. It's all implied in a single "nu".

MARGIE. *(asking again)* "Nu?"

CHOLLY. Yep. And then I say *(with elaborate hand waving)* "E-h-h…"

(She laughs.)

FRITZ. Hey, sweet cheeks.

MARGIE. Put a sock in it, Fritz.

CHOLLY. Oh, that laugh. Without you, Margie, life is a mere bag of shells.

(He goes to give her a peck. She turns so he gets her cheek.)

MARGIE. *(She giggles.)* You're spoken for. And you got flour on your nose.

(She licks her finger and rubs it off. **CHOLLY** *swoons.)*

CLIFTON. *(crossing)* Margie, Cholly.

CHOLLY. Ooo – I'll never wash my nose again.

MARGIE. So how you like the new digs?

CHOLLY. *(waving his hand like earlier)* "E-h-h…" Where's the toilet?

*(***JUDITH** *enters from theatre lobby door.* **CLIFTON** *reenters from upstage door.)*

FRITZ. Judy, I thought you'd never get here.

JUDITH. Judith. And I'm all grown up now, Fritz. I have two kids, two ex's and I'm not looking for any more of either.

BUZZ. *Two* ex's?

JUDITH. It's a "catch and release" program. *(to* **CLIFTON***)* Sally's right behind me. We shared a cab.

*(***SALLY** *enters.)*

Do you know what a cab from Manhattan costs, Clifton?

FRITZ. When are we moving back to the City, Clifton?

CLIFTON. What's wrong with Newark?

FRITZ. *(counting on his fingers)* The air is brown; it smells like a bus station –

SALLY. – and it's 7 bucks from Manhattan; that's what's wrong with Newark.

BUZZ. *(going offstage to wheel out the clock)* Fritz, can you give me a hand?

*(***SALLY** *is dressed as the archetypical "Rosie the Riveter." Her middle two fingers on one hand are taped together with white tape.* **CHOLLY** *looks at his watch and corrects the studio clock.)*

JUDITH. Here's a fin.

(gives **SALLY** *a five dollar bill)*

Catch you later…

*(***JUDITH** *disappears upstage.)*

MARGIE. Unless she's eatin' a potater…

(Only **CHOLLY** *laughs.)*

BUZZ. How many rivets today, Sally?

SALLY. Don't work Fridays.

(Pulling off the tape, trying her fingers. **BUZZ** *watches.)*

Yesterday, first shift, a little over 1200. *(explaining the tape)* Trigger finger. *(to* **CLIFTON***)* Cliff.

*(***BUZZ** *notices the studio clock and readjusts it.)*

You gotta do something about the travel costs. When I signed on, I knew nothing about the move to Jersey. I'm almost losing money on this gig.

CLIFTON. I can't help it, Sally; in this economy everybody has to tighten their belts.

CHOLLY. 'Cept me. I can't tighten mine.

FRITZ. Sally Simpson. How fetching.

SALLY. Go fetch a bone, Fritz.

*(***BUZZ** *laughs again.)*

MARGIE. Isn't he awful?

BUZZ. He's Fritz.

SALLY. Gotta go change.

BUZZ. Just wear that for the show.

CHOLLY. Yeah. It's radio.

SALLY. I've got to at least wash up.

CHOLLY. Well, there is that.

SALLY. Hey!

CHOLLY. I'm kidding. You smell like a cinnamon babka.

SALLY. You bring me a pie tonight, Cholly?

CHOLLY. We sold the last piece 15 minutes ago.

BUZZ. To whom?

CHOLLY. *(smiling)* Guilty. *(goes back to reading the Herald Tribune)*

*(***SALLY** *laughs,* **JUDITH** *crosses in front of her.)*

(to **BUZZ***)* I can't get enough of the stuff. I see it in my sleep. *(rubs his tummy)* 'Tis the season.

(Silent business. **CHOLLY** *notices the studio clock time and "corrects" it, then heads for the phone. This routine can continue throughout the show as long as it's focused.* **CLIFTON** *exits through upstage door to get new pages and scripts.)*

SALLY. *(brushing her teeth, spitting into Clifton's coffee mug)* Judith, Republic's got a seat on the drill press that's got your name on it.

JUDITH. Are you kidding me? *(laughs)*

SALLY. Come on, Judith. It builds strong bodies eight ways.

JUDITH. I've got a job. And I live in Manhattan.

SALLY. So do I! *(spits again into Clifton's coffee mug)*

*(***TOOTS** *is noodling at the piano.)*

CHOLLY. *(holding a period New York City Daily newspaper)* Ah there's bad news tonight!

FRITZ. Yeah, you're here.

ESTHER. *(Appearing suddenly. In productions without Esther,* **CLIFTON** *should say these lines:)* Cholly, use the pay phone. That's why we got it. The studio phone is only for studio business.

CLIFTON. I know it's odd that we have a phone in the studio, but remember we were lucky to get this room, and the telephone jack was in here so that's where the phone has to be. And anyway, it's Christmas Eve; who's gonna call us anyway? I'm assuming that none of you gave out the number…

(Silence, **CAST** *look around guiltily.)*

ESTHER. Clifton, please remind your cast and crew who makes the business calls at WOV.

CLIFTON. *(grabbing his coffee mug away from* **SALLY***)* You and me, Esther.

ESTHER. *(to* **CHOLLY***)* You see? Him and me. Not him and me and you. Just him and me.

CHOLLY. *(to* **ESTHER***)* Lend me a nickel?

MARGIE. *(bellows)* CLIFF-TONN!!

*(***CLIFTON** *drinks from Sally's toothpaste mug.)*

CLIFTON. *(about the "coffee")* Mm. Minty, full-bodied. Good job on the coffee, Buzz.

BUZZ. Huh?

*(***TOOTS** *exits.)*

MARGIE. Clifton?

CLIFTON. *(to* **MARGIE***)* Yep?

*(***BUZZ** *readjusts the clock.)*

MARGIE. *(flipping through pages)* Aren't we doing the Hobo sketch tonight?

CLIFTON. The only sketch tonight is Christmas Shopping.

MARGIE. *(tossing some script pages up in the air)* Aw, geez.

CHOLLY. *(having dialed the pay phone already)* Hi, Midge, I got here OK. Sure, they're open all night. Clifton, you got a pencil?

MARGIE. *(to* **CLIFTON***)* Lemme see the shopping sketch.

CLIFTON. *(spreading scripts on chairs in piles)* In a minute, soon as I collate them. You're in "Lingerie."

*(***MARGIE** *exits.)*

CHOLLY. *(to* **CLIFTON***, who has given him a pencil)* Margie's in lingerie?
(into phone) Nothing, Midge.

*(***BUZZ** *exits upstage, crossing downstage of* **CHOLLY***, to finish setup.)*

CHOLLY. Okay, what do you want? *(writing)* An order of stuffed cabbage, yeah yeah. The "Weequahic Famous Open Triple-Decker Club Sandwich: corned beef/pastrami/tongue, yeah, sizzling hot off the grill," of course, yeah. Double Russian, yeah-sure. Five half-sours. *(She asks about the Nesselrode pie.)* No we ran out of Nesselrode pie this afternoon. *(defensively)* I did not! No they won't have any more 'til after 10. So how about a slice of the silky-smooth chocolate cream pie? Good choice. Okay. And a basket of hot, soft rolls, of course. *(watches* **MARGIE** *go by)* Okay, Midge. See you after the show.

BUZZ. Hey, Cholly, how's Midge?

CHOLLY. Fat.

JACKIE. *(entering from theatre lobby)* Hey guys, I'm stuck. Can a couple of you give me a hand?

CHOLLY. *(like a "he-man," grabbing his coat)* I got it.

SALLY. No, I got it.

CHOLLY. Come on, you're a girl.

SALLY. Just hold the flashlight.

*(***CHOLLY** *and* **SALLY** *exit with* **JACKIE**. **CLIFTON** *looks at* **FRITZ**, *who hasn't moved.)*

FRITZ. *(again the new shoes, his excuse for not helping)* Don't want to scuff the new kicks.

*(***JUDITH** *has re-entered with* **TOOTS** *and heads to the piano with him.* **BUZZ** *has picked up the newspaper Cholly has brought in.)*

CLIFTON. Toots, you finish the verse?

TOOTS. Yep. We're working it right now.

FRITZ. Judith, this song is a career-maker, you know.

*(***TOOTS** *begins noodling from "Quiet Night.")*

JUDITH. Maybe go right to Broadway?

FRITZ. Or Broad Street.

*(***JUDITH** *and* **TOOTS** *start rehearsing the ballad at the piano.)*

MARGIE. Aw, quit yer beefin'. Until last year, The Horn and Hardart Kiddie Hour paid me with merchandise. One week I got $8 cash, 2 bottles of Patton Brothers Hair Renew, 11 pounds of bread, and 7 pounds of washers from Henderson's Hardware.

FRITZ. *(privately, to* **JUDITH***)* Hey, I have a something for you. Just a little thing. *(smarmy)* How about drinks after the show?

JUDITH. Fritz. How many times do I have to say "no"?

FRITZ. (*smiling and a little too close to* **JUDITH***)* I love it when you're angry…

CLIFTON. Judith, how about a drink after the show?

JUDITH. You too?

CLIFTON. *(innocently)* What did I say?

FRITZ. I was here first.

SALLY. Clifton, we need to talk about cab fare.

JACKIE. *(having reentered with the rest)* And gas money for all of us who *drive. (He looks at* **SALLY***.)*

MARGIE. You live three blocks from here, squirt.

JACKIE. Hey, it all adds up.

SALLY. But *we* live in Manhattan.

JACKIE. *(smiling)* Hey, Sally, I just got my license.

*(***FRITZ** *and* **CLIFTON** *watch* **JUDITH** *apply stocking lines on the backs of her bare legs with eyebrow pencil.)*

SALLY. *(not impressed)* Great.

BUZZ. Still got the paper route?

JACKIE. *(laughs, then confidentially to* **BUZZ***)* Shhh. Just Sundays.

BUZZ. Watch this.

*(***BUZZ** *folds the newspaper he's been reading in 2.8 seconds, tosses it toward the exit and it lands offstage.* **CHOLLY** *calls out.)*

JACKIE. *(humbled)* Wow.

CHOLLY. *(off)* Hey!

*(***TOOTS** *plays a fragment of "Take Me Out To The Ballgame.")*

BUZZ. *(proudly)* I won an award.

CHOLLY. *(re-entering)* Hey, Jackie, you missed the porch. *(gives him the newspaper back)* You guys should-a seen Sally lift that rear bumper all by herself!

SALLY. Told you. *(flexes her biceps)*

MARGIE. Wonder Woman.

FRITZ. *(recites the slogan for Wonder Woman comics)* "As beautiful as Aphrodite, as wise as Athena, swifter than Hermes, and stronger than Hercules."

*(***BUZZ** *looks at* **FRITZ**, *puzzled.)*

I have a collection.

SALLY. Margie, we could use you on the drill press at Republic.

MARGIE. Yeah? What's it pay?

SALLY. $31.76 a week.

BUZZ. It's on Long Island.

SALLY. You get train fare…

MARGIE. I'd have to quit my job at the oculist's.

CHOLLY. What's an oculist?

MARGIE. I have no idea.

SALLY. Talk to your sisters too. Two million women can't be wrong…

MARGIE. Zazu and Vi don't do well with tools.

CHOLLY. Zazu and Vi??

MARGIE. I didn't name them.

FRITZ. Jackie, what kind of shoes are those?

*(***CHOLLY** *watches* **MARGIE** *apply lines on the backs of her legs with eyebrow pencil.)*

JACKIE. Thom McAn's.

FRITZ. Oooo, your poor arches. *(looking around that no one hear this "special deal")* Look, I can get you into a pair of *(showing* **JACKIE** *his)* Florsheims for eight bucks.

JACKIE. But they're rationing shoes now.

FRITZ. I got connections. What are you? 7? 7-1/2?

*(***FRITZ** *goes to the studio phone and begins to dial.)*

ESTHER. *(appears, taking receiver away from him)* That goes for you too, Buster. The studio phone is for business only.

(She takes the receiver out of his hand and hangs it up.)

*(***FRITZ** *gives up and goes to the pay phone to make his call.)*

MARGIE. *(shouting)* CLIFF-TONN!

CLIFTON. I'm right here!

MARGIE. *(flipping through pages)* Hey, we aren't doing the Kindergarten sketch tonight?

CLIFTON. Like I said, we're only doing the shopping sketch.

MARGIE. *(tosses more script pages up in the air)* Aw, geez!

CLIFTON. We can't run long tonight.

MARGIE. Well you cut all my good stuff.

*(***JACKIE** *has been practicing with the newspaper: folding, aiming, throwing.)*

SALLY. Hey fellas, why aren't you working for Uncle Sam?

(A pause. Then one by one, the guys put up their hands as they speak.)

JACKIE. *(holding the newspaper)* Too young.

FRITZ. *(dialing pay phone)* Too old.

CLIFTON. Way too old.

CHOLLY. Flat feet.

(All look at **BUZZ**.*)*

BUZZ. I enlisted last week.

(No one knew.)

(to everyone) I would've told you all eventually.

SALLY. When do you report?

BUZZ. January 18.

SALLY. When were you planning to tell us?

CHOLLY. Maybe it'll be over by then.

BUZZ. *(half-heartedly)* Yeah.

(pause)

JACKIE. *(putting newspaper back on the coffee table)* Has everyone finished their Christmas shopping?

MARGIE. Jackie!

(studio phone rings)

CHOLLY. A little tact, maybe?

ESTHER. *(holding the receiver of the studio phone)* Jackie, your muthuh. *(hangs up receiver, smiles)* Use the payphone.

FRITZ. *(to* **JACKIE***)* You're all set. New Florsheims next Friday night. Nine bucks.

JACKIE. I thought you said eight.

FRITZ. I get a commission.

JACKIE. Can I borrow a nickel?

FRITZ. Nope.

*(***JACKIE** *scours the cast for a nickel, gets one, puts it in the pay phone and dials.)*

CLIFTON. Cholly, the pencil?

FRITZ. Margie, wasn't your beauty mark on the other side last week?

*(***CHOLLY** *laughs,* **MARGIE** *doesn't think it's funny.)*

(Eventually everyone is listening to Jackie's phone call home.)

JACKIE. Hey, Ma. Nope, no skidding. It's just slushy. I got stuck right by the hotel but some of the gang helped me out. You should-a seen Sally; she lifted the whole car. No really, she lifted the whole car. No, I'm not getting a cold. Okay. Okay. Okay.

*(***TOOTS** *tinkles something on the piano mocking the tender moment.)*

JACKIE. *(cont.) (very quietly)* I love you too. *(even quieter)* Very very. *(beat)* For real. *(beat)* For really real. *(kisses the mouthpiece of the phone)*

(He hangs up, looks around, everyone's staring.)

(innocent) What?

ALL. Awwww.

*(***TOOTS** *plays a glissando to punctuate the* **CAST** *reaction.)*

CLIFTON. How about it, Judith?

JUDITH. What is it with you guys? Depends on the weather. And my cab fare.

FRITZ. How about we all go The Palm after the show?

SALLY. That's a great idea.

CHOLLY. The Palm?

MARGIE. A steakhouse two doors down from the Apollo.

TOOTS. Across the street from the Hotel Theresa.

SALLY. 125th Street.

JACKIE. I can't drive into Manhattan.

FRITZ. We'll take cabs. On Clifton.

CLIFTON. Thanks.

MARGIE. Geez.

JUDITH. Thanks, Clifton.

CLIFTON. Well, I was thinking of something a little quieter.

JUDITH. The Palm is loud, right?

FRITZ. Can't hear yourself think!

JUDITH. Sounds perfect.

FRITZ. The 5 Red Caps, Ivie Anderson, and Oscar Pettiford are joining the Duke tonight. It's better than anything cookin' on 52nd Street.

TOOTS. I'm in.

JUDITH. What time does it start?

TOOTS. Life doesn't start 'til midnight, gang.

BUZZ. I did a broadcast gig there a month ago. They don't even take their instruments out 'til 2.

JACKIE. What does it cost?

BUZZ. I can loan you a couple bucks.

SALLY. You're only seventeen.

CHOLLY. *(glum)* I can't go. I'm delivering a sandwich.

JACKIE. You going, Sally?

CLIFTON. Okay, everyone.

(Sudden bustle, **CLIFTON** *hands out last minute changes to the script, etc. Everyone huddles around* **CLIFTON***, talking at the same time, the audience should not be able to hear specifically what is being said until…)*

(Toilet flush offstage. **CHOLLY** *re-enters.)*

CLIFTON. *(to all but particularly to* **CHOLLY***, entering)* Oh – please don't flush the toilet during the show. The mics will pick it up.

CHOLLY. Check!

CLIFTON. And – good news – the Federal Radio Commission has approved increasing our power to 1000 watts!

(The **CAST** *applauds weakly.)*

FRITZ. Wow. I guess my mom might be able to pick us up now.

CHOLLY. Where does she live?

FRITZ. Across the street.

*(***CAST** *laughs.)*

CLIFTON. With the right weather, we'll be up and down the east coast – where you used to sell shoes, Fritz.

FRITZ. Still do.

BUZZ. Where's Mr. St. Claire?

CLIFTON. The car service is bringing him. He'll be here –

ALL. Car service?!

CLIFTON. Back off. We were lucky to sign him. It was the least we could do.

JUDITH. Where's he live?

CLIFTON. Manhattan.

SALLY. He could-a picked us up!

CLIFTON. He's coming from Philadelphia.

FRITZ. Philadelphia?

CLIFTON. Visiting his sister.

CHOLLY. Philadelphia, P.A.

MARGIE. Philadelphia, P.U. *(like "pee yew")*

*(***CHOLLY** *laughs.)*

CLIFTON. The car picked him up at Penn Station at 6:30.

FRITZ. St. Claire's son is overseas right?

CLIFTON. Yes. His son David, uh, was a pilot in the Air Force…

SALLY. Was?

*(***CLIFTON** *lowers and shakes his head.)*

CHOLLY. You're kidding.

CLIFTON. His manager told me.

JUDITH. When?

CLIFTON. June.

MARGIE. *(hands to her mouth)* Oh, God.

(There is a pause.)

FRITZ. How'd it happen?

CLIFTON. He died when his plane went down somewhere over France.

MARGIE. Oh, no.

SALLY. Gee.

(pause)

JACKIE. Anybody know how late Bamberger's is open tonight?

MARGIE & CHOLLY. Jackie!?

(beat)

JACKIE. What? I still need to get something for my girl.

MARGIE. How *is* your mom, Jackie?

*(***CHOLLY** *howls.)*

MARGIE. *(to* **TOOTS***)* Okay, Toots, my turn!

TOOTS. Okay, Margie.

(They do a complete run through of Margie's song.)

(MUSIC: THAT CUTE LITTLE ELF*)*

MARGIE. *(sings)*

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A NO NONSENSE GAL
DOING WHAT I SHOULD
BUT I'VE TURNED INTO MUSH
SINCE I GOT A CRUSH
AND IT FEELS MIGHTY GOOD
NO MORE SENSIBLE AND SELF RELIANT
THE CHANGE YOU SEE IN ME
IS NOTHING SHORT OF GIANT

THAT CUTE LITTLE ELF SECOND ONE FROM THE RIGHT
WITH EYES THAT SHINE
HE'S FUNNY AS HECK, AND HE'S PRINCELY POLITE
HANDS OFF HE'S MINE
THE DRAPE OF HIS SUIT, THAT FABULOUS HAT
WHO WOULDN'T LOOK UP TO A GUY LIKE THAT
BOY OH BOY, WHAT A SIGHT
THAT CUTE LITTLE ELF SECOND ONE FROM THE RIGHT

THAT FUN LOVING ELF SECOND ONE FROM THE RIGHT
ONE OF THE SWELLS
A STYLE ALL HIS OWN THAT IS BOUNCY AND BRIGHT
HIS SHOES HAVE BELLS
HE LIKES SHOOTING DARTS, AND PLAYING CROQUET
OR TO RIDE BY MY SIDE IN A ONE HORSE SLEIGH
JUMPIN' JIVE AND HOLD TIGHT
THAT FUN LOVING ELF SECOND ONE FROM THE RIGHT

HE LABORS DAY AND NIGHT
HELPING JOLLY MR. C
BUT HE'S MAMA'S LITTLE HELPER
WHEN HE'S SNUGGLING HERE WITH ME
HE WRAPS A PERFECT GIFT
WITH FINE RIBBONS AND A BOW
BUT HE'S BETTER AT UNWRAPPING
TRUST ME, I KNOW
I KNOW

MARGIE. *(cont.)*

I WANT THAT CUTE LITTLE ELF SECOND ONE FROM THE RIGHT
AND I WON'T QUIT!
I FOUND ME AN ELF WITH A BIG APPETITE
WE'RE A PERFECT FIT
I LOVE HIS SWEET, POINTY EARS, THAT BOISTEROUS LAUGH
MY DREAM IS TO MAKE HIM MY BETTER HALF
THIRTY-SIX INCHES OF SHEER DELIGHT
THAT CUTE LITTLE ELF SECOND ONE FROM THE RIGHT

(All applaud spontaneously.)

MARGIE. Just before intermission, right, Clifton?

CLIFTON. That's right, Margie.

MARGIE. Hot dog!

*(***HAROLD** *has entered with a small theatrical trunk that carries St. Claire's stock properties and costumes.* **WILLIAM ST. CLAIRE** *enters. There is a pause and, slowly, one by one, everyone looks at him. His shocks of long white hair are classically dramatic. He wears a cape.* **HAROLD** *exits.)*

FRITZ. *(rushing to meet him, shaking his hand)* Mr. St. Claire, it is such a privilege. I'll be doing Marley and Christmas Present.

ST. CLAIRE. *(putting his hat in* **FRITZ***'s outstretched hand)* Will you take my coat and hat?

*(***FRITZ** *takes St. Claire's coat, hat, gloves, etc. to the coat rack.)*

BUZZ. Mr. St. Claire, I am the sound effectician here at WOV. I saw your "Hamlet" when I was a little boy.

ST. CLAIRE. You must have been very little indeed.

*(***JUDITH** *approaches the old actor, she shakes his hand- she speaks in her best mid-Atlantic accent.)*

JUDITH. Mr. St. Claire, I am Judith Davenport. I'll be playing Bella, and Mrs. Cratchit in tonight's performance.

CHOLLY. *(to* **MARGIE***)* What's that accent?

JACKIE. *(takes* **ST. CLAIRE***'s hand)* Hey, John Sparks, and I play Young Scrooge and Tiny Tim.

MARGIE. *(to* **CHOLLY***) John* Sparks?

*(***JACKIE** *shushes* **MARGIE**.*)*

SALLY. I play all the kids. And dogs, animals, bugs…and the spooky stuff.

CHOLLY. Bob Cratchit, and any ethnic characters.

MARGIE. I do Christmas Past and all things funny.

CHOLLY. Can we get you anything, Mr. St. Claire? Coffee? Tea? Water?

FRITZ. *(making a joke)* Scotch?

ST. CLAIRE. *(looks around, sizing up the cast)* Water only, please. Hot, but not too hot, with a slice of lemon and a drip or two of honey.

SALLY. We were so saddened to hear about your son.

ST. CLAIRE. Mm?

MARGIE. How're you holding up?

ST. CLAIRE. I miss him.

JACKIE. Sally makes P-47s in Long Island.

CHOLLY. *(scolding him)* Jackie.

ST. CLAIRE. David pilots a P-47.

SALLY. *(with raised eyebrows)* He does. *(haltingly)* Well, then he should be fine. Those P-47s are fine aircraft. And safe. Too. I mean, I know them inside and out. So…

ST. CLAIRE. I need a little quiet now to prepare for my performance.

CLIFTON. *(shouting toward the theatre lobby door)* OK, Harold, let 'em in.

(A mêlée of commotion and last minute warmups. **MARGIE** *is finishing her nails, some effect props have spilled onto the floor and* **BUZZ** *and* **SALLY** *are straightening them up, while…)*

*(***HAROLD***, with little enthusiasm, recites a litany of rules to an invisible audience; entering,* **TOOTS** *warms up, as well.)*

CLIFTON. Ladies and gentlemen, please have your tickets out. Petie, Dottie, and Miss Crabtree will direct you to your seats. Please, no smoking in the studio, it craps up the audio equipment and the butts burn the carpet. Spanky will be happy to assist anyone who needs a cab after the broadcast. Enjoy the show.

JACKIE. *(stumbles through articulation exercises,* **SALLY** *laughs)* "The seething sea ceaseth, and having ceaseth, the seething sea sufficeth me."

ST. CLAIRE. *(to* **JACKIE***)* Shoo, boy.

FRITZ. *(about St. Claire to* **CLIFTON***)* Bah, humbug.

*(***JACKIE** *crosses downstage of* **CHOLLY***, as he passes,* **CHOLLY** *is coaching* **MARGIE** *on all things Yiddish.)*

CHOLLY. No, it's got the guttural thing going, say "chutz-pah"
[PRON. "CH" AS IN THE SCOTTISH WORD "LOCH"]

MARGIE. Hoots-spa.

*(***CHOLLY** *keeps trying.* **JUDITH** *sings full-out and* **TOOTS** *accompanies.)*

(Continued bustle. Last minute push to get ready. In contrast, **ST. CLAIRE** *moves very slowly, sits patiently, script closed and resting on his knees, completely prepared. He watches the entertainment with some disdain.* **CAST** *go into the house and hand out the "fake" programs with the characters' bios and broadcast information.)*

(As show time approaches, **CLIFTON** *heads for the center mic.)*

(SFX: **BUZZ** *CRASHES A PAIR OF BAND CYMBALS)*

(With the crash of Buzz's cymbals, all is still and the lights suddenly shift to performance lights.)

CLIFTON. *(to the audience)* Good evening to you, ladies and gentlemen of our studio audience. *(SILENCE)* We'll be on the air in just a few minutes. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you as our studio audience tonight. Now folks, a word from the Concierge of the Hotel Aberdeen. Mr. Harold Mullins. Harry?

HAROLD. Harold.

CLIFTON. Harold.

HAROLD. *(with even less enthusiasm)* Ladies and gentlemen, the buses will leave from the Elizabeth Avenue entrance of the hotel at half-past 10 tonight. These are the last busses that will depart the Weequahic *[pron. we-KWAY-ik, or, for locals, we-KWAYK]* area of Newark tonight. We at the Aberdeen, however, recommend that you avoid the dangerous trip home tonight and take advantage of the deluxe accommodations we have available tonight at the Aberdeen, the pride of Newark, New Jersey. Just stop by the front desk during the show or at intermission. Although our dining services will be closed by that time, the Weequahic Diner is open all night.

CHOLLY. …and the nesselrode pie is especially good tonight.

FRITZ. He ought to know.

MARGIE. He makes 'em.

CHOLLY. *(shy smile)* Every day.

MARGIE. *(rubbing* **CHOLLY***'s tummy)* …and eats 'em.

CHOLLY. *(still smiling)* …every night.

HAROLD. *(clears his throat loudly)* Our ensemble is passing out your free souvenir program *(he holds one up)* in which you can read about the cast and tonight's performance. We would like to also take this time to welcome the members of the *(reading from a large index card he removes from the inside pocket of his suit coat)* "Order of the Mystic Shrine" who are conventioning here at the Aberdeen. *(as he puts the card back into the pocket)* We applaud the Shriners' outstanding War Bond sales record and the lead they take in Civil Defense work in all of our communities.

CLIFTON. Yes, the Shriners are a most serious and dedicated group.

CHOLLY. *(mockingly)* You betcha!

(MUSIC: STUPID ORGAN GAMESHOW STING)

CLIFTON. No, Toots, I am not forgetting you! What would our show be without Toots Navarre and our new Hammond "B"! Thank you, Toots.

TOOTS. You can call me Toots.

CLIFTON. Thank you…Toots.

TOOTS. Soli-tudy.

*(***ESTHER PIRNIE** *slips onstage wearing her signature overalls, stringing a cable from offstage over to Buzz's turntable.)*

CLIFTON. Oh – and let's not forget the gal who makes this all happen, without whom none of us would be here tonight…our technical wizard and transmission goddess, Miss Esther Lewis Pirnie!

ESTHER. Everybody, the studio phone is for official business *only.* For the *personal* stuff *(gestures to it and smiles)* – we got a pay phone.

CLIFTON. …Thanks, Esther. Keep 1280 kilocycles clear and strong for our show.

ESTHER. *(Sees the studio audience. Locks up, paralyzed by stage fright.)* Okay. *(She sneaks offstage.)*

BUZZ. *(off-mic)* 35 seconds…

CLIFTON. Thank you, Buzz. Now folks, when you see the "On Air" signs flash…

(SFX: ON AIR SIGNS FLASH)

BUZZ. *(off)* 30 seconds. Places, everyone.

(Cast take their places watching **BUZZ** *for the countdown.* **MARGIE** *is waving her nails to dry them.)*

CLIFTON. …we will be broadcasting live tonight, Christmas eve, 1943, courtesy of WOV broadcasting from our shiny new broadcast towers here in beautiful downtown Newark.

BUZZ. Stand by.

Now folks, in their efforts to support our men and women in the armed forces, the War Department has provided broadcast studios like ours with the

equipment necessary to produce this program on what is known as a "V-Disc."

*(***BUZZ** *gestures to a sign in front of the machine that says "Supplied by the music branch of the Special Services division of the military. Victory disk lathe and shellac disks property of the War Department.")*

This enterprise is only 3-months old but, with it, our boys overseas can enjoy the very same Merry Christmas as you in home town America.

*(***BUZZ** *puts a shellac disk on the v-disk lathe and puts the needle down.)*

And of course, you know what to do when you see these signs flash…

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

CLIFTON. Ah, I knew you'd know what to do.

BUZZ. Standby.

CLIFTON. Thank you, Buzz.

BUZZ. In 5…4…3…

(holds up two fingers, then one finger, pointing to **CLIFTON***)*

(REC'G: TIME TONE)

CLIFTON. *(official)* This is the Mutual Broadcasting System. *(simply)* It's 8 o'clock, Eastern War Time.

(MUSIC: INTRO TO OPENING SONG)

(high-power) Live from the lobby of the beautiful Hotel Aberdeen at 10-12 Washington Place in lovely Newark, New Jersey, WOV is on the air!

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGN FLASHES)

(Lights have shifted to the saturated, rich and colorful lights of the broadcast. **CAST** *surrounds microphones.)*

(MUSIC: NEWARK*)*

CLIFTON & COMPANY *(sings)*

WHAT DO YOU DO
WHEN YOU NEED EXCITEMENT?
WHERE CAN YOU GO
WHEN YOU NEED A THRILL?
THERE'S ONE PLACE I KNOW
WHERE THE LAUGHTER COMES EASY
YOUR PULSE STARTS TO RACE
AND YOUR FEET WON'T STAY STILL
NOBODY LEAVES FEELIN' DOWN
YOU'LL GO NUTS FOR THIS SWINGIN' TOWN

IT'S TRUE, BLUE, NEW, NEW
NEWARK
N-E-W-A-R-K *(SPELL IT)*
THAT'S RIGHT, NEW, NEW, NEW, NEW
NEWARK
IT'S EASY TO SPELL
DELIGHTFUL TO SAY
OH, YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU
NEWARK
YOU ARE THE ESSENCE OF CLASS
BREATHE IN THE BANKS OF THE MIGHTY PASSAIC
NEWARK, YOU'RE A GAS!

THE MOUNTAINS OF NEWARK
THE WATER FOUNTAINS OF NEWARK
AND NARY A CLOUD UP ABOVE
THE GLAMOUR OF NEWARK
CRAZY CLAMOR OF NEWARK
AND EVERY LAST NEWARKIAN
IS CHOCK FULL OF LOVE
IT'S HEAVEN ON EARTH
AND IT NEVER WILL SPOIL
THAT'S WHY WHEN I DIE
JUST PLANT ME IN THE NEWARK SOIL

NEW, NEW, NEW, NEW
NEWARK,
A STAR SPANGELED HOLIDAY
HALLELU, LU, LU, LU

NEWARK
JUST SEEIN' THE SITES
CAN MAKE YOU FEEL GAY
OH, YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU
NEWARK
YOU'RE A HUMDINGER, IT'S TRUE
NEW YORK IS SWELL BUT IT JUST AIN'T NO "JERSEY"
NEWARK, PRIDE OF THE RED, WHITE & BLUE
N-E-W-A-R-K
NEW JERSEY, U S A.

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

CLIFTON. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Celebrating our beautiful new home here in the garden spot of the Garden State: Newark, New Jersey. That was Toots Navarre and the Boutonnieres!

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

(dramatically) Tonight…

(MUSIC: LOW DRAMATIC BASS)

(unctuous and scary, with a sneer) The Nash-Kelvinator Mystery Theatre. Brought to you by Nash. "Nash is here to stay."

(MUSIC: MUSIC BUILDS, CUTS OUT)

*(***MARGIE** *takes out her gum, puts it on top of the microphone nearest to Toots…)*

(SFX: GUN SHOT FROM STARTERS PISTOL [MICS OFF FOR THIS AND THE SCREAM])

*(…***MARGIE** *screams, takes back her gum and matter-of-factly walks back to her chair while chewing it.))*

(MUSIC: CONTINUES, LOW, SUSPENSEFUL TONES)

CLIFTON. Yes, the Nash-Kelvinator Mystery Theatre, your weekly departure to mystery and adventure. Tonight, we present…

(MUSIC: SUDDEN SHIFT TO A CHEERY AND LIGHT INSTRUMENTAL OF "DECK THE HALLS")

…the seasonal classic, Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol."

CLIFTON. Hi folks, it's Clifton Feddington.

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

Thank you, folks, thank you. *(humbly)* You're so *very* kind.

And of course thanks to you folks at home and overseas. Thank you for spending another Friday night with your friends at WOV.

Our regular programming…

(MUSIC: TOOTS PLAYS "FILM NOIR" THEME [MINOR KEY])

…the hard-boiled detective Rick Roscoe in "The Man with No Tomorrow" will return next Friday *(***FRITZ** *waves)*, and although last year's episode of the Rick Roscoe Christmas thriller, "Silent Knife, Holy Knife" was a great success –

*(***FRITZ** *"stabs" at an invisible opponent.)*

(MUSIC: SEGUE AS ONE INTO "DECK THE HALLS")

– we hope to start a new holiday tradition tonight with our freshly contemporary retelling of Dickens' Christmas classic, "A Christmas Carol."

(MUSIC: OUT)

Now how could anyone imagine "A Christmas Carol" without the resounding "Bah Humbug" of Ebenezer Scrooge! We are privileged and humbled to introduce you to the star of stage and screen, William St. Claire.

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

Welcome to WOV New Jersey Studios, Bill.

ST. CLAIRE. That's William.

*(***CLIFTON** *marks the correct pronunciation with his ever-present pencil.* **CLIFTON** *gestures to audience for more applause.)*

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

*(***ST. CLAIRE** *bows humbly from the waist.)*

ST. CLAIRE. Thank you.

CLIFTON. And a very Merry Christmas to you, William.

ST. CLAIRE. You'll excuse me if I don't respond in kind but I'm not much of a "holiday" person.

CLIFTON. *(minor setback)* Well…

FRITZ. *(to* **CHOLLY***, quietly off-mic but still audible)* Bah, humbug.

CLIFTON. Well, it must be a very different experience performing in radio, William.

ST. CLAIRE. I'll let you know.

CLIFTON. After years on the stage and on the silver screen –

ST. CLAIRE. – this is more than a little step down.

CLIFTON. *(unflappable)* So this your first radio appearance?

ST. CLAIRE. Appearance?

CLIFTON. I meant to say will this be your first radio performance?

ST. CLAIRE. It will, yes. I have appeared on Broadway twenty-one times and I have made over forty films, but this is my first flight on the air, so to speak.

CLIFTON. *(a tiny setback)* Well, we hope you enjoy it as much as I know we will –

ST. CLAIRE. And, speaking of flight, I am thrilled that this show is being broadcast to the men and women in the armed forces. As you know, my son David pilots a P-47 for the US Ninth Air Force and I would like to send a personal greeting to him at this time.

CLIFTON. *(a little thrown)* Of course. *(steps back)*

ST. CLAIRE. David, I love you and am so very proud of what you are doing for our country. But I cannot celebrate Christmas properly until you return home, so please come home soon.

*(***CAST** *is a little bewildered by St. Claire's message to his son who the cast knows has died.)*

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

*(***CLIFTON** *cues* **JACKIE. ST. CLAIRE** *sits down and sips his water.)*

JACKIE. Say, Mr. Feddington?

(MUSIC: BRIEF TINKLING)

CLIFTON. Little Jackie Sparks, ladies and gentlemen.

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

JACKIE. Before we get started with tonight's broadcast…

CLIFTON. Yes?

JACKIE. Well, it's Christmas Eve and all, and I haven't bought my mom a present yet!

CLIFTON. Jackie, you do this every Christmas. When will you learn to shop early?

JACKIE. I know…

CLIFTON. I'll tell you what Jackie, let's you and I go right now. I have to pick up a few things too.

MARGIE. Hey could I go too?

CLIFTON. Margie O'Brien everyone!

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

Sure. Come on along. While we go next door to Bingles Department Store, why don't Toots and The Boutonnieres sing a Christmas carol or two?

JACKIE. That's a swell idea, Cliff.

CLIFTON. Toots?

(MUSIC: **TOOTS***, OUT FRONT WITH HIS BATON, CONDUCTS THE COMPANY SINGING "DECK THE HALLS.")*

COMPANY. *(sings)*

DECK THE HALLS WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY
FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY
FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
DON WE NOW OUR GAY APPAREL
FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA
TROLL THE ANCIENT YULE-TIDE CAROL
FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA

(SFX: SALVATION ARMY BELL, CROSSFADES WITH:)

(REC'G: DEPARTMENT STORE CROWDS)

FRITZ. Now, through the magic of radio, we find ourselves in Bingle's Department Store amidst the mad Christmas Eve rush.

(SFX: DEPARTMENT STORE DOOR AND "DING DING" FROM DEPARTMENT STORE. A CROWD OF SHOPPERS.)

(Note: the pace of the shopping sketch is quick. Build to laughs, then pause expectantly. Build to the presumptive laughs indicated as with (L) below.)

(SFX: LAUGHTER SIGN FLASHES WITH EVERY "L" INDICATED.)

JUDITH. *(pinching her nose so she'll sound like she's on a public address system)* Attention, shoppers: 2-for-1 Sale in "Lingerie," 2-for-1 Sale in "Lingerie." That's a 2-for-1 Sale in "Lingerie."

CLIFTON. Well, here we are. Gee, it's crowded in here. Everybody pushing and shoving. Give me your hand, Margie.

JUDITH. *(moving to the Downstage mic, a club lady)* Let go of me, young man. My name's Bertha. *(L)*

CLIFTON. Oh, pardon me, Madame. Margie, Margie where are you?

MARGIE. *(talking into a cereal box)* I'm over here in "Lingerie."

CLIFTON. Well, take it off and stick with me. *(L)* Jackie, meet us back here in a few minutes.

JACKIE. Okay, Mr. Feddington.

CLIFTON. Oh Margie, I need you to help me pick something out for Judith.

MARGIE. Okay, but what about me?

CLIFTON. Santa'll take care of you.

MARGIE. That's what you said last year and that rabbit muff was still moving. *(L)*

CLIFTON. I think I'll get her something in the jewelry department.

MARGIE. Good idea.

CLIFTON. Now I wonder where the jewelry counter – oh, mister…

FRITZ. *(as Frank Nelson)* Y-e-e-e-e-s.

CLIFTON. Is this the jewelry counter?

FRITZ. No, I'm a deep sea diver and these are my pearls. *(L)*

CLIFTON. I'd like to buy a lady's wristwatch.

FRITZ. How about a nice fountain pen?

CLIFTON. I don't want a fountain pen, I want a wristwatch.

FRITZ. How are you gonna write a letter with a wristwatch? *(L)*

CLIFTON. Now look, you, I don't want to write a letter!

FRITZ. You don't, eh?

CLIFTON. No.

FRITZ. Well it's guys like you that cause all the trouble in this country.

CLIFTON. What trouble? Look, you wanna sell me a wristwatch or not?

FRITZ. I wouldn't sell you a wristwatch if you were John Cameron Swayze. *(L)*

CLIFTON. Come on, Margie, let's go.

MARGIE. Why don't you just take the fountain pen, Cliff. I think Judith would love it.

CLIFTON. All right. How much is the fountain pen?

FRITZ. Four dollars.

CLIFTON. All right. Here you are. Wrap it up and I haven't got all day.

FRITZ. Okay.

CLIFTON. Fresh guy.

(SFX: PAPER CRUNCHING)

CLIFTON. Hey, what's the idea wrapping that pen in a blotter?

FRITZ. It leaks a little. *(L)*

CLIFTON. Four dollars for a leaky pen; I oughta report you. What's your name?

FRITZ. Woo-Woo Smith. *(L)*

CLIFTON. Gimme back my four dollars.

MARGIE. Come on, Cliff. Hey, look:
there's Santy Claus over there, sitting in that sleigh.

JACKIE. Jeez, all dressed up in red.

CLIFTON. Let's go over and see 'em. He looks so fat and jolly.

*(***CHOLLY** *takes issue with the fat comment.)*

Come on, let's go talk to 'em.

MARGIE. *(giggles)* This oughta be fun.

JACKIE. I'm scared.

CLIFTON. *(having a good time already)* Funny, I feel just like a kid again.

MARGIE. Go ahead, talk to him, Cliff.

CLIFTON. Oh, I don't wanna. He might ask me if I've been a good boy.

MARGIE. Oh, go on, Cliff.

CLIFTON. Hello, Santy Claus.

CHOLLY. *(as old Mishke Bibble,speaking with a heavy "Yiddish" accent)* Hello, stranger! *(L)*

(SFX: APPLAUSE SIGNS FLASH)

CLIFTON. Hey, it's Mishke Bibble!

CHOLLY. No, I'm Kris Kringle now.

CLIFTON. How have you been, Meesh?

CHOLLY. Oh, life is one long trip to the toilet. *(L)*

CLIFTON. Well, tell me Meesh. How do you happen to be Santy Claus?

CHOLLY. I don't know. I came in here to buy a suit and they sold me a red one. *(L)*

CLIFTON. It is kinda loud, Mishke.

CHOLLY. I feel like a stop light. *(L)*

CLIFTON. How do you like talking to all the little children?

CHOLLY. Well, I guess it's better than a trip to the dentist. *(L)* Tell me, Margie, what do *you* want for Christmas?

MARGIE. Can you put a mink coat in my stocking?

CHOLLY. For you, Margie, I'd put anything in your stocking.

MARGIE. Boy, you *are* Santy Claus.

CLIFTON. Jackie, tell Santy what *you* want.

JACKIE. Oh, I'm too big for that stuff.

CHOLLY. Oh, tell me Jackie boychik, what would you like to find in your stocking Christmas morning?

JACKIE. Me. My feet are cold. *(L)*

CHOLLY. Not too bright. Ever try milking him? *(L)*

CLIFTON. Well, Meesh, we gotta be getting back to the station. When will I see you again?

CHOLLY. Well I'll tell you, Cliff:

(MUSIC: INTRO TO "COMIN' ROUND THE MOUNTAIN")

CHOLLY. *(sings)*

I'LL BE COMING DOWN YOUR CHIMNEY WHEN I COME
I'LL BE COMING DOWN YOUR CHIMNEY WHEN I COME

CLIFTON. *(sings)*

YOU'LL BE COMING DOWN MY CHIMNEY

MARGIE. *(sings)*

HE'LL BE COMING DOWN HIS CHIMNEY

CHOLLY. *(sings)*

I'LL BE COMING DOWN WHEN SMOKE GETS IN MY EYES

MARGIE & JACKIE. *(sing)*

HE'LL BE COMIN DOWN CLIFF'S CHIMNEY WHEN HE –

CHOLLY. *(speaking quickly in tempo)*

CAN'T YOU HEAR ME CALLING WHEN THE SNOW IS GENTLY FALLING?

MARGIE & JACKIE. *(sing)*

HE'LL BE COMING DOWN THE CHIMNEY WHEN HE COMES

CHOLLY. *(speaking in tempo)*

I WOULD LIKE A CUPPA TEA WHEN I BEND YOU ON MY KNEE

ALL. *(sing)*

HE'LL BE COMING DOWN THE CHIMNEY; HE'LL BE COMING DOWN THE CHIMNEY

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